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ABSTRACT

This module, which may be used as the basis for a workshop or as a special topic unit in adult basic education or English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) courses, focuses on dealing with stress on the job and in daily life in the United States. Topics covered include the following: analyzing one's schedule and listing stressful times; applying four options for dealing with stress; practicing relaxation techniques; locating resources to assist with stress; working in teams; problem solving; and using information resources. Basic skills addressed include thinking skills, using resources, interpersonal skills, and working with systems. The module contains the following: teaching points for the instructor; sample learning activities; a list of seven resources; a sample lesson plan consisting of objectives, learners and context, room setup, materials needed, tasks to do ahead, media used, and steps for conducting the lesson; role-play materials; and pre- and postassessments. (KC)

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ED 416 353

LAES
Latino Adult Education Services

Tierra de Oportunidad

MODULE 16

Dealing With Stress

Ed Kissam and Holda Dorsey

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MODULE 16
Dealing with Stress

Overview

Stress is one of the most serious threats to health and well-being which immigrants face in their daily lives. Everyone in an information-based society and economy must deal with stress. But immigrants run the risk of even higher levels of stress than people born in the U.S. -- because they have not yet learned the societal "rules of the game" of how people pursue their personal objectives, address their differences, resolve conflicts, and, ultimately, get along in the United States.

Coping with stress is a key competency for success -- at work, at home, and in dealing with the community one lives in. In the information society, everyone needs "high performance" skills, not just for the workplace and for getting ahead in a career but, also, for managing one's life and for living in tension-filled communities.

Because "the rules of the game" of social interactions are "invisible" -- things we seldom or never talk about (except perhaps to our children) -- immigrants face unique problems, deciding whether the way they've gotten along with people "at home" work here and, even if they do, how those ways of coping may need to be modified or transformed to work well in California.

The social environment is different here; it is a different world -- at work, in the street and public places, and even at home. Pioneering this "tierra de oportunidad" is challenging. It is, in significant ways, a social wilderness inhabited by -- demanding bosses, confusing shopkeepers, unfamiliar neighbors, unruly children. Many immigrants may, understandably, find it difficult to feel at ease in one or more aspects of their lives.

Stress is universal. It has two faces. All animals, human beings included, when confronted with a stressful situation mount a **"fight or flight"** response -- increased adrenaline, increased blood pressure, a whole cascade of actual physiological changes in their bodies. Stress makes us more alert. That alertness is, in many ways, a marvelous thing. Under stress, we can become more resourceful -- clever, creative, insightful, fast, quick, bright. The list goes on. But under stress, we can also become dysfunctional -- irritable, aggressive, distracted, unpredictable. This list goes on, too.

Surprisingly, a crucial part of learning to cope with stress is learning to just respond -- to move ahead, eyes open, spirit strong, not recklessly, but not timidly either. Key

skills to build are the ability to browse curiously from time to time, to reflect carefully, but, also, to keep on task. Just as executives are taught in business planning that an "environmental scan" -- looking around at one's surroundings -- is a key part of success, it is crucial to teach immigrants to look around, reflect on who they are, what they want, and recognize that the social ecology of America presents both risks and opportunities.

Whether one's social environment is seen as a "País Desconocido" a confusing, dangerous and unfamiliar jungle or a "Tierra de Oportunidad", a rich, bountiful and exciting paradise, depends on one's point of view. A key set of personal objectives are to systematically seek to decrease long-term stress, accept the inevitability of transient stressful situations, and learn how to manage stress.

Basic Skills Development

This module provides a framework for building meta-cognitive competencies, that is, for students to bring together and practice skills in many different sub-areas. Crucial competencies which this module addresses and strengthens include: 1) reflection, 2) analytic thinking involving comparisons, 3) decision-making, 4) learning-to-learn, and 5) planning.

An important learning objective for this module is that there is no single "trick" for coping with stress but that adult life in a fast-paced society requires new ways of thinking about oneself and one's life. Coping successfully depends on "who you make yourself to be" in self-reflection, as much as what things you can do or not do. This module addresses several different skills areas within the SCANS framework, including:

Thinking Skills	weighing conflicting values and objectives, conducting an environmental scan for threats and opportunities, knowing how to learn, using information resources, reflection, discussion
Uses Resources	personal, family, community, and institutional resources, setting priorities
Interpersonal Skills	relying on others
Works With systems:	linkages between different system areas (work, life, community), how systems pressure people, support systems to help respond to pressures

LAES

Teaching Points

1. ***Stress is inevitable and "normal" given the pace of U.S. work and life.*** The rhythm of life in the U.S. is driven by the reality that everything is speeded up. Even if work seems to be easier than in a rural community in Latin America, for example, time counts more. When wages are falling and working conditions are deteriorating in the low-skill sectors of the economy, where most immigrants work, pressures keep on growing. Being "stressed-out" is not unusual; it's a "normal" part of many different sorts of people's lives -- truck drivers, doctors, store owners, mothers. Being poor in the United States usually means a person is under stress at work and at home while living in a community where many other people and families are, also, under stress. Students who experience one form or another of stress should not feel that "something is wrong" with them.

2. ***Stress is not always easy to recognize.*** People respond in many different ways to stress. "Fight" or "flight" are two poles. "Fight" responses to stress are fairly obvious: impatience, irritability, working faster and making more mistakes. "Flight" responses are less obvious: being withdrawn, indifferent can also be signs of being under stress.

3. ***Stress has long-term implications for physical health.*** We are "designed" to deal quite well with short-term stress. We are not well-suited to long-term stress. Possible stress-related problems include: high blood pressure, lowered immunity, and ulcers. Because stress is related, in large part, to people's adaptation to their environment it's not always easy to measure your level of stress. Talking to a doctor, nurse, counselor, or health care provider if you think you are under stress is always a good idea.

4. ***Stress has long-term implications for mental health.*** Being under stress tends to make the relations of a person with other people more difficult and full of friction. Stress tends to escalate. Therefore, dealing with the causes of stress is an important part of making things better. Otherwise, stress can spiral upward and upward, escalating into real problems.

5. ***Doing something is almost always better than doing nothing.*** Ignoring stress is not a useful way to cope. "Doing something", trying to change the conditions which are stressful, is the core strategy to use. But "doing something" doesn't mean "doing anything". It means a step-by-step process:
   a) recognizing sources of stress and why they are stressful,
   b) setting priorities about what deserves attention,
   c) reflecting about what will work and what won't work,
   d) planning, after developing a clear idea of what you want,
   e) trying to change things at a reasonable pace, experimenting to see what works and what doesn't,
   f) reflecting again about how its going.

Stress at Work

6. ***Stress often comes from pressure for outcomes.*** The U.S. workplace is more and more structured and each individual's pace and style of work affect the welfare of everyone on their team or in a whole company. The workplace is increasingly managed in a structured way designed to maximize outcomes. Information technology makes it possible to continuously monitor how productive workers are, how well they are doing their jobs. Immigrant workers commonly work in jobs where pay is by the piece (agriculture, sewing, waiting tables) where stress is easy to recognize, but its not so easy to recognize when stress comes from supervisors, job insecurity, or unclear or unfamiliar work demands. Finding a good way to manage stress comes from understanding specifically what is the source of pressure.

7. ***It's useful to take a team approach to stress at work.*** In today's workplace, it's hard to deal with stress alone. Talking things over with supervisors can often be helpful -- as supervisors and their employees will both benefit from working things out. But if supervisors aren't approachable, talking things over among co-workers can help. Then they can join together to go to their supervisor to talk about how to change things to decrease stress or conflict.

8. ***Distinguish between sources of stress and what one can do about them.*** A key part of problem-solving for stress management is to distinguish exactly what is wrong. Does a supervisor make worklife stressful because they do not explain tasks clearly, because they seem to expect too much, because they're hard to understand? Is the pace of work always stressful or just sometimes? To what extent is work stressful because one isn't adequately prepared or trained to meet work demands? Understanding the answers to these questions will provide the basis for knowing if something can be done or not, and if something can be done, what. If getting along with a supervisor is stressful because they do not like a person, changing jobs may be the only solution. If it is difficult to get along because of communication problems in English, taking an ESL course may be the best solution. Analyzing the problem is the basis for deciding what to do.

9. ***Making long-term plans is one of the best ways to deal with stress in the long run.*** Many workers discover that they simply are not prepared to cope with the stresses of the job they are currently doing. Some may be for awhile but not forever. Farm workers' backs simply do not allow them to earn enough doing the work they did when they were 20, when they are 50. Professionals like lawyers and doctors often find they "burn out" and can not keep working on under the pressures they face in jobs where there are unceasing expectations for high performance. But by the same token, many people in "unskilled" jobs face the same stressful expectations -- waitresses, community outreach workers, machinists, van drivers.

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Stress at Home

10. ***It is not useful to let work stress spill over into home life..*** ***Talk things out.*** Spouses and children do not know what has made someone angry, uptight, worried, or stressed-out at work. "Taking a deep breath", consciously tabling work problems when one goes home is an essential part of getting a rest and getting the space to reflect. Taking stress home can make stress even worse by adding to the burden. But talking work problems over with one's partner, one's relatives, or even one's children, can be a way of making sure that one does not take work stresses out on them. But even then, its useful to strike a balance..

11. ***Changing roles for men and women is an important source of stress. Talk things out..*** U.S. life makes new demands on immigrants in terms of roles. Changing roles does not necessarily require changing one's values about what is important in life. Being clear about the tensions of changing roles (e.g. men's child care roles when women work) is crucial. (For in-depth examination of this theme see the following modules: "Women's Changing Roles", "Men's Changing Roles", "Women in Non-traditional occupations").

12. ***Children growing up in two or more cultures is an important source of stress. Talk things out..*** Children usually live in several simultaneous cultures in the U.S. -- their parents' culture, their friends' culture, and the culture of their schools. Each of these cultural contexts can give rise to tensions. Some of the most difficult stresses may even come from situations where the cultural difference gives rise to a valuable learning experience -- when a child can not do home chores because they are involved in an extracurricular activity, when a child questions traditional ways and wants to understand why. Talking things out make the stresses more manageable even if the sources of stress are not going to go away. For details see Module "Children's Changing Roles".

13. ***Sharing living space is an important source of stress.*** ***Talk things out.*** A crucial immigrant strategy for economic survival is to share living space. In contrast to life in Latin America where people sharing space are usually part of an extended family (and where conflict still arises), some immigrant households in the United States are, groups of people sharing space even though they are not bound together by family ties or even knowing each other well. Talking things out makes sense even if the only solution is for an individual or a group of people to move out. Conflicts can arise and escalate from changes in people's lives without their housemates' understanding clearly what is the source of tension.

14. ***Clarifying, comparing, and compromising are essential.*** Clarifying sources of tension, comparing possible solutions, and compromising to strike a fair balance are a key to resolving conflicts at home, as well as at work. Even if one's traditional perspective is, for example, that children do not deserve a voice in household decisions, clarifying, comparing, and, even a measure of compromise, are likely to be essential to keep even part of one's tradition. The reality is that biculturalism (with all that implies for people's value systems) is the only way to preserve traditional cultural values. Without striving for biculturalism, "mainstream" U.S. culture is likely to govern life in almost any immigrant household or, if not, create sharp divisions within families.

15. ***Finding time for play and for sharing concerns is not a waste of time.*** Life in the U. S. tends to be less communal than in Latin America. Because there are so many, and such sharply divergent contexts for people's lives, people tend to be isolated. Relaxing is a key part of stress management. Finding time for family life, or fun with friends, is an important part of managing stress. Sharing means sharing experiences from each family member's divergent life. Not only does sharing make it easier to cope with the burden of stress but, also, family and friend's can give advice, suggestions, and help a person establish or re-gain a sense of priorities.

16. ***Getting help makes good sense.*** Life in the U.S. is difficult enough that getting help in dealing with the problems one faces is not a sign of weakness but a sign of strength, not a sign of mental illness but of healthiness. Seeking help may simply entail asking family or friends to help one cope with stress but it may also include getting help from a paraprofessional or a professional. It is important to remember that substance abuse -- drinking too much, using drugs, or even smoking -- can be a person's response to stress. A great deal is known about how to deal with these problems and it makes sense to get help with them. Fighting at home with the people one loves is not the way people need to be and, here too, getting help can make it possible to cope with stress. Getting help means to seek out help and sometimes it also means getting help for someone you know -- a family member, a friend, or a neighbor who's dealing with more stress than they can handle.

17. ***Recognize changing patterns of stress.*** Project-based workplace management, or rotating schedules makes life increasingly stressful for many U.S. workers. Changing schedules from one shift to another, for example, is now recognized to make subtle physiological changes in how people function. The changing demands of children's school and social lives (particularly among teenagers) can unpredictably change levels of stress. Attention and reflection on how changing "environmental factors" (at work, at school, in health, well-being) create new stresses and modulate pre-existing ones, is important. Special events, in particular, -- both "good" and "bad" ones -- may increase the stress a person experiences.

Stress in the Community

18. ***Ethnic and class conflict are real sources of stress.*** U.S. society is multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and socially stratified, causing varying levels of tension among individuals and groups. Differences in class (e.g. income, educational background, job status) as much as in ethnicity can give rise to high levels of stress. Even if no short-term solutions are feasible, it is worthwhile for individuals, families, and neighborhoods to seek a common ground for cooperating to reduce stress. A particularly important common ground is for parents to work jointly to improve their children's schools. Investing time in community efforts to decrease crime and support other community initiatives --e.g. community policing initiatives, conflict resolution boards, youth recreation initiatives, neighborhood cleanups-- have paid off (even in the short-run) for communities.

19. ***Building self-esteem is a way to counter stress.*** Threats to one's identity or sense of self-worth are an important stressor in many California communities. Because education, communication skills, and earnings are such indicators of social status in our information society and economy, immigrants almost inevitably run the risk of being stressed by uncertain self-esteem. Also, increasing tensions between native-born and foreign-born Americans make self-esteem even more difficult to achieve. One obvious antidote is to discuss and understand why it is that people treat other people in a disrespectful way. Obvious antidotes are: recognition, respectful treatment, praise, paying attention, and speaking to others as equals. School programs which rely on immigrant parents as resources in teaching a multi-cultural curriculum are an important element in community strategies to build immigrant families' self esteem. Starting or joining existing efforts in this realm are always useful.

20. ***Wait and talk it out later.*** Increasing levels of community violence are, unfortunately, a part of life in many California communities. Equally unfortunate, victims of violence are usually low-income families living in high-crime neighborhoods. Random violence is, by definition, impossible to escape but it is possible to avoid escalating into violence. When a person is under tremendous stress, the best idea is to wait and talk things out later, no matter how immediately pressing it seems to respond (e.g. unfair treatment, bad driving).

Sample Learning Activities

1. Ask students to estimate how much of their time each week they spend: a) working, b) sleeping, c) traveling from one place to another, d) doing essential errands and housework, e) taking care of children, and f) disposable time for whatever they want. Compare different patterns.

2. Invite a community health clinic, county public health department, or local family physician to make a presentation to the class on the physical and psychological consequences of stress and techniques they recommend to patients for managing stress.

3. Discuss the kinds of workplace demands which students in the class think are the most stressful. Stressors may include physical demands of the workplace, supervision practices, job uncertainty. Have students consider the extent to which different people's experience with work-related stress is similar or different and why.

4. Have students assess how serious they think the tensions between ethnic groups are in their community. Ask them to compare their overall assessment of the level of inter-ethnic conflict, with their own experience. Is their own experience better or worse than the overall level.

5. Have students inventory the main ways in which life in the community they now live in differs from the community they grew up in. It may be useful to note that even people who were born in the community they now live in may feel that it's not the "same" community any more. To what extent and in what ways do students think this has made their lives easier or more difficult.

6. Ask students to inventory the kinds of people and community resources they know of where someone who felt that they were dealing with "more than they could handle" obtained advice and support. As a follow-up, it might be useful to invite a representative from one or more of these community agencies to talk to the class about how to get counseling support and what financial arrangements (if any) might be.

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Resources Checklist

Videocassette rental -- "Mi Familia"

Assessment Instruments -- Significant life changes rating scale.

Many community clinics, county health departments, and community-based organizations distribute a community resources guide (including community mental health resources). Teacher might set up a "contact assignment" for the students to go and request copies.

La Guia del Bienestar, CA Department of Mental Health
Section 3, Mantenerse Sano

A detailed and definitive discussion from the National Academy of Science, **Enhancing Human Performance: Background Papers-Stress Management,** National Academy Press, Washington, DC.
[The National Academy of Science maintains an on-line bookstore to make it easy to order books.]
http://www.nap.edu/nap/bookstore/

Instructors with access to the Internet may assign students to browse through stress management resources on the Internet. The Alta Vista search engine gives a wide range of results. A good starting point is the Stress Space Homepage. Not all of its resources are relevant but it is a good research and report for the students.
www.foobar.co.uk/users/umba/stress/

Commercial Textbooks

English for Action, Addison - Wesley
P. 84, Stress

Job Survival Skills, Educational Design, Inc.
Ch. 9, Stress

16. DEALING WITH STRESS

OBJECTIVES

- analyze schedules and list stress times;
- apply four options for dealing with stress;
- practice a relaxer technique;
- locate resources to assist with stress.
- working in teams;
- problem solving;
- using information resources.

LEARNERS & CONTEXT

Adult students. Average ability of the group is medium. The range of ability is wide. Motivation is high. Group size is between 11 and 30. There are many learners whose English is limited.

ROOM SETUP

Chairs and small tables to allow for pair or small team work.

TO BRING

Handouts and transparencies.

TO DO AHEAD

Bring tape player and soft music.
Gather phone books.

MEDIA USED

Overhead, print, objects or props, audio player.

STEPS

Warm up
Introduction
What's stress?
Sharing Information
Review weekly schedule
List stress times
How to handle stress
Find an option
Break
Report back
Use phone book
Take a stress test
Relaxer technique
Reflection
Closure

Lesson Plan: Dealing With Stress

	Warm up	Teacher asks students to stand up in the center of the room. We are going to play four corners.
(15 min)	*Motivation* *• Establish Future Relevance*	* Teacher instructs students who feel pressure at work to walk to corner A. (Some students will walk and others will stay in the center). * Teacher asks students who feel rushed all day to walk to corner B. (Again some students will and some will not). * Teacher asks students who are upset with their family to walk to corner C. (By now students are moving around from corner to corner, and starting to stare at others). * Teacher asks students who are worried about something to walk to corner D. Teacher can add other stress related situations until all students are at a corner. Teacher points out that we all have stress in our lives, but we need to deal with it.
	Introduction	Teacher shows objectives on the overhead projector. Teacher states that through this lesson students will:
(10 min)	*Information Preview* *• State Objectives Formally*	Analyze their schedules and list stress times; Apply four options for dealing with stress;
	overhead	Practice a relaxer technique; Locate resources to assist with stress. You will also practice: Working in teams; Problem solving; Using information resources.
	What's stress?	Teacher asks students to sit in groups of four. Teacher hands out the readings about stress.
(15 min)	*Information Acquisition* *• Silent Reading*	Each member of the group has one part of the reading. Students read the print materials to themselves and make notes.
	print	
	Sharing Information	Students instruct their partners on what they read. Students discuss the readings and clarify each others information.
(10 min)	*Practice & Feedback* *• Group Practice - Indep.*	Teacher walks from group to group, monitoring and assisting as needed.

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Lesson Plan: Dealing With Stress

	Review weekly schedule	Teacher asks students to work in their group of four. Students are to review their daily and weekly schedule, analyze it with their partners to find times or activities that cause stress.
(15 min)	*Information Acquisition* • *Inquiry - Group*	
	print	
	List stress times	Teacher asks each student to list the times, situations or activities that cause their stress.
(10 min)	*Practice & Feedback* • *Individual Practice - Indep.*	Students review and analyze list and rate each item by giving 10 to the highest stress item, 9 to the next highest, etc.
	How to handle stress	Teacher gives students reading: "How to get a handle on stress".
(10 min)	*Practice & Feedback* • *Reading Aloud*	Students in groups of four take turns reading to others to provide information.
	print	Students and teacher discuss the points mentioned in the reading.
	Find an option	Students work together in groups looking at their "stress" lists and finding an appropriate option to deal with each stress situation.
(15 min)	*Practice & Feedback* • *Group Practice - Indep.*	Teacher monitors students discussions and clarifies questions.
	Break	Students may take a few minutes to stretch, walk around, change places. Teacher completes attendance records and other data collection.
(10 min)	*Other* • *Break*	

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Lesson Plan: 16. Dealing With Stress

	Report back	Students report to the class on the best solution they found to deal with one of their stress moments.
(10 min)	*Practice & Feedback* *• Peer Feedback*	
	Use phone book	Teacher asks students to use the phone book to locate places that provide help to people under stress.
(15 min)	*Practice & Feedback* *• Creative Practice*	Students can work in groups to compile listing.
	objects or props	The lists from groups can be combined to produce one all inclusive directory.
		* Teacher might want to ask some students to call a few places for information regarding their services.
	Take a stress test	Teacher tells the students that many of their actions and feelings can be warning signals of stress.
(10 min)	*Practice & Feedback* *• Q & A*	Teacher gives students a self test to check how well each students handles stress.
	print	
	Relaxer technique	Teacher guides the students through a quick relaxer technique.
(10 min)	*Practice & Feedback* *• Group Practice - Guided*	
	audio	
	Reflection	Students reflect on their self test and on what they have learned about managing stress.
(15 min)	*Closure* *• Reflection*	Students prepare a plan that they can practice daily to handle stress. Students can write their plan on their journal or on a sealed note to themselves, which the teacher will keep for a month and then give to the student at the appropriate time to self evaluate their plan.
		Or students can share verbally with the class their plan for reducing stress.

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Lesson Plan: 16. Dealing With Stress

	Closure	Teacher reviews the objectives, students may point out the important aspects.
(10 min)	*Closure* • *Instructor Summary*	Analyzed your schedules and listed stress times; Applied four options for dealing with stress; Practiced a relaxer technique;
	overhead	Located resources to assist with stress. You also practiced: Working in teams; Problem solving; Using information resources.

OBJECTIVES

You will be able to:

- **Analyze your schedule and list stress times;**
- **Apply four options for dealing with stress;**
- **Practice a relaxer technique;**
- **Locate resources to assist with stress.**

You will also practice:

- **Working in teams;**
- **Problem solving;**
- **Using information resources.**

"What is Stress?"

A. ***Stress is inevitable and "normal" given the pace of U.S. work and life.*** The rhythm of life in the U.S. is driven by the reality that everything is speeded up. Even if work seems to be "easier" than in a rural community in Latin America, for example, time counts more. Because wages are falling and working conditions are deteriorating in the "low-skill" sectors of the economy where immigrants work, pressures keep on growing. Being "stressed-out" is not unusual; it is an a "normal" part of many different sorts of people's lives -- truck drivers, doctors, store owners, mothers. Being poor in the United States usually means a person is under stress at work and at home while living in a community where many other people and families are, also, under stress. Students who experience one form or another of stress should not feel that "something is wrong" with them.

B. ***Stress is not always easy to recognize.*** People respond in many different ways to stress. "Fight" or "flight" are two poles. "Fight" responses to stress are fairly obvious: impatience, irritability, working faster and making more mistakes. "Flight" responses are less obvious: being withdrawn, indifferent can also be signs of being under stress.

C. ***Stress has long-term implications for physical health.*** We are "designed" to deal quite well with short-term stress. We are not well-suited to long-term stress. Possible stress-related problems include: high blood pressure, lowered immunity, and ulcers. Because stress is related, in large part, to people's adaptation to their environment it is not always easy to measure your level of stress. Talking to a doctor, nurse, counselor, or health care provider if you <u>think</u> you are under stress is always a good idea.

D. ***Stress has long-term implications for mental health.*** Being under stress tends to make the relations of a person with other people more difficult and full of friction. Stress tends to escalate. Therefore, dealing with the causes of stress is an important part of making things better. Otherwise, stress can spiral upward and upward, escalating into real problems.

E. ***Doing something is almost always better than doing nothing.*** Ignoring stress is not a useful way to cope. "Doing something", trying to change the conditions which are stressful, is the core strategy to use. But "doing something" doesn't mean "doing anything". It means a step-by-step process:
a) recognizing sources of stress and why they are stressful,
b) setting priorities about what deserves attention,
c) reflecting about what will work and what won't work,
d) planning, after developing a clear idea of what you want,
e) trying to change things at a reasonable pace, experimenting to see what works and what doesn't,
f) reflecting again about how its going.

"Stress at Work"

A. ***Stress often comes from pressure for outcomes.*** The U.S. workplace is more and more structured and each individual's pace and style of work affect the welfare of everyone on their team or in a whole company. The workplace is increasingly managed in a structured way designed to maximize outcomes. Information technology makes it possible to continuously monitor how productive workers are, how well they are doing their jobs. Immigrant workers commonly work in jobs where pay is by the piece (agriculture, sewing, waiting tables) where stress is easy to recognize, but its not so easy to recognize when stress comes from supervisors, job insecurity, or unclear or unfamiliar work demands. Finding a good way to manage stress comes from understanding specifically what is the source of pressure.

B. ***It is useful to take a team approach to stress at work.*** In today's workplace, it is hard to deal with stress alone. Talking things over with supervisors can often be helpful -- as supervisors and their employees will both benefit from working things out. But if supervisors are not approachable, talking things over among co-workers can help. Then they can join together to go to their supervisor to talk about how to change things to decrease stress or conflict.

C. ***Distinguish between sources of stress and what one can do about them.*** A key part of problem-solving for stress management is to distinguish exactly what is wrong. Does a supervisor make worklife stressful because they do not explain tasks clearly, because they seem to expect too much, because they are hard to understand? Is the pace of work always stressful or just sometimes? To what extent is work stressful because one is not adequately prepared or trained to meet work demands? Understanding the answers to these questions will provide the basis for knowing if something can be done or not, and if something can be done, what. If getting along with a supervisor is stressful because they do not like a person, changing jobs may be the only solution. If it is difficult to get along because of communication problems in English, taking an ESL course may be the best solution. Analyzing the problem is the basis for deciding what to do.

D. ***Making long-term plans is one of the best ways to deal with stress in the long run.*** Many workers discover that they simply are not prepared to cope with the stresses of the job they are currently doing. Some may be for awhile but not forever. Farmworkers' backs simply do not allow them to earn enough doing the work they did when they were 20, when they are 50. Professionals like lawyers and doctors often find they "burn out" and can not keep working on under the pressures they face in jobs where there are unceasing expectations for high performance. But by the same token, many people in "unskilled" jobs face the same stressful expectations -- waitresses, community outreach workers, machinists, van drivers.

"Stress at Home"

A. ***It is not useful to let work stress spill over into home life.. <u>Talk things out.</u>*** Spouses and children do not know what has made someone angry, uptight, worried, or stressed-out at work. "Taking a deep breath", consciously tabling work problems when one goes home is an essential part of getting a rest and getting the space to reflect. Taking stress home can make stress even worse by adding to the burden. But talking work problems over with one's partner, one's relatives, or even one's children, can be a way of making sure that one doesn't take work stresses out on them. But even then, its useful to strike a balance..

B. ***Changing roles for men and women is an important source of stress. <u>Talk things out.</u>*.** U.S. life makes new demands on immigrants in terms of roles. Changing roles does not necessarily require changing one's values about what is important in life. Being clear about the tensions of changing roles (e.g. men's child care roles when women work) is crucial. (For in-depth examination of this theme see the following modules: "Women's Changing Roles", "Men's Changing Roles", "Women in Non-traditional occupations").

C. ***Children growing up in two or more cultures is an important source of stress. <u>Talk things out.</u>*.** Children usually live in several simultaneous cultures in the U.S. -- their parents' culture, their friends' culture, and the culture of their schools. Each of these cultural contexts can give rise to tensions. Some of the most difficult stresses may even come from situations where the cultural difference gives rise to a valuable learning experience -- when a child can not do home chores because they are involved in an extracurricular activity, when a child questions traditional ways and wants to understand why. Talking things out make the stresses more manageable even if the sources of stress are not going to go away. For details see Module "Children's Changing Roles".

D. ***Sharing living space is an important source of stress. <u>Talk things out.</u>*** A crucial immigrant strategy for economic survival is to share living space. In contrast to life in Latin America where people sharing space are usually part of an extended family (and where conflict still arises), some immigrant households in the United States are, groups of people sharing space even though they are not bound together by family ties or even knowing each other well. Talking things out makes sense even if the only solution is for an individual or a group of people to move out. Conflicts can arise and escalate from changes in people's lives without their housemates' understanding clearly what is the source of tension.

"Stress in the Community"

A. ***Ethnic and class conflict are real sources of stress.*** U.S. society is multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and socially stratified, causing varying levels of tension among individuals and groups. Differences in class (e.g. income, educational background, job status) as much as in ethnicity can give rise to high levels of stress. Even if no short-term solutions are feasible, it is worthwhile for individuals, families, and neighborhoods to seek a common ground for cooperating to reduce stress. A particularly important common ground is for parents to work jointly to improve their children's schools. Investing time in community efforts to decrease crime and support other community initiatives --e.g. community policing initiatives, conflict resolution boards, youth recreation initiatives, neighborhood cleanups-- have paid off (even in the short-run) for communities.

B. ***Building self-esteem is a way to counter stress.*** Threats to one's identity or sense of self-worth are an important stressor in many California communities. Because education, communication skills, and earnings are such indicators of social status in our information society and economy, immigrants almost inevitably run the risk of being stressed by uncertain self-esteem. Also, increasing tensions between native-born and foreign-born Americans make self-esteem even more difficult to achieve. One obvious antidote is to discuss and understand why it is that people treat other people in a disrespectful way. Obvious antidotes are: recognition, respectful treatment, praise, paying attention, and speaking to others as equals. School programs which rely on immigrant parents as resources in teaching a multi-cultural curriculum are an important element in community strategies to build immigrant families' self esteem. Starting or joining existing efforts in this realm are always useful.

C. ***Wait and talk it out later.*** Increasing levels of community violence are, unfortunately, a part of life in many California communities. Equally unfortunate, victims of violence are usually low-income families living in high-crime neighborhoods. Random violence is, by definition, impossible to escape but it is possible to avoid escalating into violence. When a person is under tremendous stress, the best idea is to wait and talk things out later, no matter how immediately pressing it seems to respond (e.g. unfair treatment, bad driving).

Weekly Schedule

TIME	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	STRESSORS

How To Get A Handle On Stress

Once you know what is causing your stress, it is time to do something about it. Here are four options you can try.

1. You can **relieve the symptom**: Try a relaxation exercise or get a massage for the tense muscles.

2. You can **tolerate stress** better when you prepare yourself by building up your resistance. Eat right, do aerobic exercises and take care of yourself. You can also change how you perceive a situation. By reviewing your objectives and setting more realistic ones, the stressor will not bother you as much.

3. You can **alter the stressor** by changing the source of stress. You are hosting a dinner party. You can alter the stressor by planning well in advance, or asking for help, or buying items already prepared, rather than doing everything by yourself.

4. You can **avoid the stressor** by walking away from the situation. Sometimes it is better to walk away or delegate. Recognize your limitations and sidestep the situation.

Some examples:

You are angry over something you can not control.	Go for a walk, go running, play tennis.
You had a bad day.	Listen to quiet music, turn down the lights; go for a stroll in the park or on the beach.
You are angry over a past hurt or injustice.	Write a letter listing all your hurts, put it aside. Tomorrow throw it away.
You do not have time for yourself.	Make a list of what you "must do". Analyze it, cut it down to only three items. Do not do anything else.
Hurry up and wait and wait.	Carry something to read to pass the time.
Always worried.	Make a list of everything that worried you. Analyze it, cut it down to only three real worries. Forget the rest.
Deadlines at work, school or home.	At the beginning of your day do a "to do" list. Prioritize your list, work based on priority.

Directory Health - Stress Reduction

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Stress Self Test

Recognizing stress symptoms is one of the most important steps in controlling it.
Circle the number that describes how often you experience the following stress symptoms.

1 = Seldom 2 = Sometimes 3 = Often

You have:			
Difficulty in breathing	1	2	3
Difficulty sleeping	1	2	3
Headaches	1	2	3
Grinding teeth	1	2	3
Neck and shoulder aches	1	2	3
Tight muscles	1	2	3
Upset or nervous stomach	1	2	3

You feel:			
Bored	1	2	3
Depressed	1	2	3
Dismayed	1	2	3
Embittered	1	2	3
Frustrated	1	2	3
Homesick	1	2	3
Impatient	1	2	3
Worried	1	2	3

You:			
Become hostile	1	2	3
Can't make decisions (freeze)	1	2	3
Cry	1	2	3
Eat more/eat less	1	2	3
Have no time for family/friends	1	2	3
Use alcohol/drugs/cigarettes	1	2	3
Yell	1	2	3

If your total is over 36 points, stress might be controlling you! Check it out!

Total **(1)___ + (2) ___ + (3)___ = _____**

Relaxer Technique

Teacher: Play some soft music, dim the classroom lights and read softly to guide the students through the relaxation.

Relaxing can relieve some of the physical symptoms of stress and help you feel, think and perform better.

You can try this relaxer technique sitting, standing or lying down.

Make sure your clothing is loose and your waistband or belt is comfortable.

You may close you eyes if it makes you more comfortable.

Please imagine a beautiful relaxing place: maybe the beach, or a garden, or your grandmother's house, just imagine and relax.

Begin by breathing through your nostrils.

Slowly count to five, silently saying the word "in" as you let your abdomen fill with air. One, two, three, four, five.

Now, slowly count to five and silently say the word "out" as you let the air escape through pursed lips. One, two, three, four, five.

Continue breathing in and breathing out, counting, for about two minutes.

Open your eyes slowly.

How do you feel? Are you more relaxed?

With practice you will be able to count to ten or higher.

You can try this technique when you feel the stress building up. Stress is part of life, how we handle stress is what makes a difference.

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Student Survey
"Dealing with Stress"

1. Have you ever thought or talked with family members, friends or co-workers about the following indicators of stress:

	For Each Line, Please check the box that applies to you			
	Never or almost never	Several times in a year	At least once a month	Every day
a. the amount of stress in life and how it affects the family, the person, or the community?				
b. the behaviors that result from but also may cause stress, such as setting priorities impulsively, yelling, sleeplessness?				
c. resources in the community to talk with to try to handle stress better?				
d. the long term implications of stress for physical health?				
e. the long term implications of stress for mental health?				
f. the pressure to perform at work or to do things at home, that sometimes seems to much to bear?				
g. the problems of getting conflicting information from different people?				

2. How confident are you that you have the skills to:

	For Each Line, Please check the box that applies to you			
	Not Confident	A Little Confident	Quite Confident	Not Interested
a. juggle conflicting demands at work or at home and negotiate a viable arrangement?				
b. communicate about conflicting expectations, hopes or desires, and work out an acceptable arrangement, either at work, with friends, or at home?				
c. explain clearly to others what you expect and then listen well enough to be able to plan for problems you are likely to face?				

d. identify resources to help you in times of high stress?				
e. mediate arguments among friends or family members				
c. find information or advice you can trust?				

3. Please read the background information below and advise Marisela and her husband what they can do to reduce the stress they are feeling.

Background. Marisela is very intelligent and loves to study. She took English classes at the local school two nights a week for two years . But now she needs a more advanced class. She wants to go to the community college. Her husband, Pete, won't give her his permission. She is angry with him and feels very resentful. Pete also feels resentful. After all the attention he has paid her and the way he has taken care of her, he feels she is not interested in taking care of him. They argue a lot. Marisela has wanted to talk with him; but he says always says he is too tired. What can they do?

a. What is the problem Marisela and her husband are facing?

_____

b. What fears, hopes or concerns, lie beneath the problem for Marisela or her husband? Please write a short dialogue where either Marisela or her husband Pete discusses what is bothering them

_____

Marisela:

_____

Pete:

_____

Marisela:

_____

Pete:

_____

c. Should Marisela take seriously Pete's comment that he is too tired to talk? Why or why not?

_____

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4. How important is it for you to learn more about how to:

	For Each Line, Please check the box that applies to you			
	Not Very Important	A Little Important	Quite Important	Not Interested
a. identify sources of stress in your life?				
b. communicate expectations better?				
c. listen better to be able to anticipate times when you will not get the help you want, so you can better plan for them?				
d. analyze what can be done to change stressful conditions, situations, or personal interactions?				
e. use information resources, reflection, discussion to improve your control over your life?				
f. recognize and understand behavior - either your own, your spouse's or your child's - that is the result of stress?				
g. learn how to talk things out at home or in any environment where stress is causing a conflict?				
h. recognize when you need to get help for a problem that is stress-related				
i. find out where you can go to get help with stress related problems?				

5. What do you want to learn about dealing with stress?

I want to learn:

LAES

Date: _____

Student Name _____

Teacher Name _____

Module 16
Dealing with Stress

Instructions: Please join with three or four other students to work on this activity as a group. The activity is divided in two parts. The first part asks you to read the stories provided and analyze the cause or causes of stress and how it can be handled. The second part asks you to reflect on your work with this module and tell us what you have learned.

Part I.
With your group, read the stories on the following page, and select 2 to focus upon. For each story, determine the cause or causes of stress, and list ways the people can deal with the stress you decided to work on. When thinking about what the people in the story can or should do, refer to the 4 options for dealing with stress and the resources for helping people cope with stress discussed in class, as well as other ideas or experience your group members have.

Write down your answers on the answer sheet following the page of stories. Each person should write down the answers from the group on their own sheet, and turn it into the teacher.

Select two stories below to focus upon

Story 1.
The Garcia family's son Juan is 17. He is changing a lot lately. He used to be an excellent student. Now the school has called three times to report that he didn't come to school. His teacher called and told the family he isn't participating in class and often doesn't turn in his homework. He has new friends the parents don't like. He doesn't talk to his father and mother. He stays out very late and sleeps very late on the weekends. He was fired from his job for coming to work late. He has also changed his hair and the clothes he wears. The parents think he might be involved in a gang and might be using drugs. They are very worried about him. What can they do?

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Story 2.
Pedro's brother Mario has been living with Pedro and his family for 3 months. He can't find a job. Sometimes he has worked for a day or two but mostly Pedro is supporting him. Pedro has a wife and four children. Paying the expenses of his brother is very difficult and he and his wife argue about this situation. Mario is trying to find work. There is a lot of tension in the house. What can they do?

Story 3.
Isidra lives with her husband and daughter. She went to English class and speaks very good English. Life is much easier now. She feels very independent and good about herself. She can talk with their landlord, her daughter's teacher, make doctor and dental appointments and function very well in the United States. Now she is taking computer classes at the community college. But 6 months ago, her husband's brother, wife and 2 children moved into her house. One of her nieces has medical problems and needs a lot of medical attention. Her sister-in-law doesn't speak English. She asks Isidra to translate and make appointments for her all the time. She doesn't drive and Isidra has to take her everywhere. She doesn't help much with the cooking and housework. She sits and watches TV a lot. She complains if Isidra goes out anywhere without her. Isidra is getting more and more upset. Her husband doesn't want to talk about the problem. What can she do?

Story 4.
Jaime works on a large ranch. He doesn't like the mayordomo and for this reason he dislikes his job. The mayordomo gives preferences to his friends and relatives. He gives them the best schedules and easiest jobs. He speaks disrespectfully and shouts at Jaime all the time. Jaime comes home tired and irritable. He shouts at the kids to be quiet and criticizes his wife for little things. What can he do to change his situation?

Story 5.
Jorge sends money home to Mexico every month. His wife Carmen wants to save the money to buy a house here. They fight about this a lot. Jorge says it is money he makes and he can decide how to spend it. Some evenings they are so angry they don't talk to each other at all. The children are feeling insecure. What are some solutions?

Story 6.
Pedro hurt himself at work. He can't go back to work for 4 months. He has a wife and 3 kids. He can't pay his bills. He isn't sleeping well because he worries a lot. He feels very depressed and watches TV most of the day to forget his problems.

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Answer Sheet for Module 16: Dealing With Stress

Instructions: Select two stories from the previous page, and, for each story, write the

- story number you are describing
- cause or causes of the stress (what you think the real problem is)
- what they could do to relieve the stress
- where they could go to get help with the particular problem(s)

Story Number _____

Cause or causes of stress_____

_____

_____

_____

Things to do to reduce stress and places to find help: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Story Number_____

Cause or causes of stress_____

_____

_____

_____

Things to do to reduce stress and places to find help: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

LAES

Part II.
Please tell us what you learned from your work with this module

1. Did you benefit from your work on this module regarding any of the following?

understanding better:	Yes/No	Please comment on either: • How you benefited; or • Why you feel this module was not useful for you in this area
a. the amount of stress in life and how it affects the family, the person, or the community?		
b. the behaviors that result from but also may cause stress, such as setting priorities impulsively, yelling, sleeplessness?		
c. resources in the community to talk with to try to handle stress better?		
d. the long term implications of stress for physical health?		
e. the long term implications of stress for mental health?		
f. the pressure to perform at work or to do things at home, that sometimes seems to much to bear?		
g. dealing with conflicting information		

2. Did your work in this module help you in any of the following areas?

	Yes/No	Please comment on either: • How you benefited; or • Why you feel this module was not useful for you in this area
a. reading and understanding written information about stress?		
b. understanding how the information you get from friends or family really applies to you?		
c. communicating about conflicting expectations, hopes or desires, and work out an acceptable arrangement, either at work, with friends, or at home?		

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	Yes/No	Please comment on either: • How you benefited; or • Why you feel this module was not useful for you in this area
d. explain clearly to others what you expect and then listen well enough to be able to plan to deal with the problems you are likely to face?		
e. speaking with family members or those outside your family, and communicating your ideas and concerns persuasively?		
f. mediating arguments among friends or family members		
g. negotiating changes in tasks or plans to spend time with friends or family to reduce stress		
h. identifying resources to help you in times of high stress?		
I. anything else? Please tell us about it below		